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ABSTRACT

A study of the factors affecting the burring of word-initial /r/ in a small English village found variability in the temporal, spatial, social, sexual, and phonic aspects of usage. Six categories of burrers are distinguished according to their speech habits. The evidence points to an ongoing socially and phonetically conditioned change in the village with stress as the underlying factor: the route of the innovation is set by the phoneme in stressed syllables as opposed to unstressed syllables, and the sound change appears to be proceeding gradually through the population. The change is also lexically gradual, with only some lexical items affected. (MSE)

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STICKERS, SHIFTERS AND OTHERS: ASPECTS OF DIALECT SPACE

1. INTRODUCTORY

This report constitutes a journey in rural dialect space with the phoneme /r/ as its route[1]. Our community is the village of Thropton (population in the 1961 census: 251), situated in the Coquet valley 2 miles west of Rothbury and 16 miles from Morpeth, Northumberland. This charming village is influenced by the multifariousness of modern society. Only one villager in three (34.0%) had lived there during all of his life,[2] and as many as one in five (20.2%) had moved in from Tyneside.[3] Its population represents all walks of life (table 1), something which implies that the potential is present for variability in attitudes and in habits to be developed and sustained.

Of the phonic environments examined for possible effects of phonetic conditioning on the values of /r/ at the macro- and at the micro-levels, we shall be concerned with (r) in word initial position (I) before short (I:1) and long (I:2) vowels, and before diphthongs (I:3). The term 'phonic' is used here to emphasize that we are concerned with types of environment at an emic level.[4,5] Altogether 69 villagers are involved as burrers here, or approximately two-thirds of all burrers (64.5%).

Diagram 1. {#rV-}: distribution of (r)-2 in word initial position

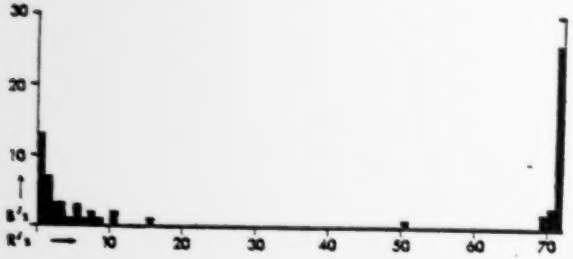

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Diagram 1 very unambiguously demonstrates that the phoneme /r/ constitutes a linguistic variable (r) in the village: the two variants used by our speakers are back /R/, which is the genuine realisation found in the dialect (v. Orton & Halliday 1962-63), and front /r/, which is an innovation (v. Viereck 1966). They will be referred to as (r)-2 and (r)-1, respectively.

The three main categories of speakers are (a) the high-burrers, i.e. those who use (r)-2 consistently or predominantly (= the cluster to the right in the diagram); and (b) the low-burrers, i.e. those who use (r)-1 predominantly but who, as part of their speech habits, also have some (r)-2 (= the cluster to the left in the diagram); and finally (c) the non-burrers, i.e. those who use (r)-1 consistently as their only variant (= not seen in the diagram) (for a description of the non-burrers, v. Påhlsson 1972:208ff). Only the burrers will form part of the direct analysis in this report.

The two categories further divide into the following types of speakers (diagram 2):

HIGH-BURRERS	
- Stickers	informants showing consistent use of (r)-2
- Stickers with some (r)-1	informants showing consistent use of (r)-2 but producing some instance of (r)-1 during the recorded interview
- Middlers	informants showing a mixed behaviour including both (r)-2 & (r)-1, with a predominance for (r)-2
LOW-BURRERS	
- Occasionalists	informants showing mainly (r)-1 with some use of (r)-2 across the classes of phonic environment
- Shifters	informants showing mainly (r)-1 with some use of (r)-2 in the class in which the pull of burring is felt the most
- Irregulars	informants showing (r)-1 with some (r)-2 as an irregular effect of the phonic environment

The variability necessary to produce changes in perception and in production (Jansson 1983) is an existing reality in the village itself.[6] We shall now turn to the linguistic and social environments of the (r) variable. The problem of how the instrument (that is, the reading-list) was arranged and of possible effects on the results is discussed at the stage where it is dialectically most relevant to do so, viz. in connection with the low-burrers below. Along the route it will gradually become apparent that the main internal operant underlying the observed patterns of variation is stress.

Table 1. Distribution of the population by social variables: high-burrers & low-burrers in word initial position

Social Variables	Over -all B's	Over -all here	I:all High B's	I:all Low B's	Low-burrers I:1	I:2	I:3	Occ	Shi	Irr
I-Age										
1: 10-14	10.3	8.7	6.3	10.8	9.4	15.4	14.3	16.7	4.8	25.0
2: 15-24	6.5	2.9		5.4	6.3				9.5	
3: 25-44	30.8	31.9	28.1	35.1	34.4	23.1	57.1	33.3	38.1	25.0
4: 45-64	31.8	36.2	40.6	32.4	31.3	46.2	28.6	33.3	28.6	50.0
5: 65+	20.6	20.3	25.0	16.2	18.8	15.4		16.7	19.0	
II-Birthplace										
1: locality	37.4	40.6	53.1	29.7	34.4	23.1	28.6	41.7	28.6	
2: burr area	43.0	47.8	46.9	48.6	46.9	53.8	57.1	41.7	47.6	75.0
3: Tyneside	12.1	10.1		18.9	15.6	15.4		8.3	23.8	25.0
4: elsewhere	6.5	1.4		2.7	3.1	7.7	14.3	8.3		
III-Residence										
1: whole life	44.9	47.8	62.5	35.1	40.6	30.8	28.6	41.7	33.3	
2: - 1950	15.0	14.5	12.5	16.2	15.6	23.1	28.6	25.0	14.3	
3: - 1965	25.2	23.2	15.6	29.7	31.3	23.1	28.6	33.3	38.1	25.0
4: 1965 -	15.0	14.5	9.3	18.9	12.5	23.1	14.3	8.3	14.3	75.0
IV-Education										
1: junior school	.9									
3: non-selective	67.3	76.8	84.4	70.3	71.9	69.2	57.1	66.7	71.4	75.0
4: selective	18.7	14.5	12.5	16.2	15.6	15.4	42.9	25.0	14.3	
5: public school	.0									
7: intermediate	9.3	5.8		10.8	12.5	7.7			14.3	25.0
8: advanced	2.9	1.4	3.1							
9: university	.9	1.4		2.7		7.7		8.3		
V-Social Class										
I : professional	4.1	1.9	3.6							
NM: non-m. interm.	16.2	15.4		33.3	34.8	16.7		14.3	46.7	
M: manual -"-	2.7	3.8	7.2							
A: agric. -"-	4.1	5.8	7.2	4.2	4.3				6.7	
NM: non-m skilled	6.8	1.9		4.2		16.7				100.0
M: manual -"-	36.5	34.6	28.6	41.7	43.5	50.0	75.0	71.4	26.7	
A: agric. -"-	1.4									
NM: partly -"-	4.1	3.8	3.6	4.2	4.3	16.7	25.0	14.3		
M: -"- -"-	4.1	5.8	7.2	4.2	4.3				6.7	
A: -"- -"-	10.8	15.4	25.0	4.2	4.3				6.7	
V : unskilled	9.5	11.5	14.0	4.2	4.3				6.7	
VI-Status										
1: professional	2.8	1.4	3.1							
2: managerial	12.2	13.0	12.5	13.5	12.5	30.8		16.7	9.5	25.0
3: skilled	25.2	28.9	28.1	29.7	34.4	15.4	42.9	33.3	28.6	
4: clerical	6.5	2.9		5.4	6.3				9.5	
5: semiskilled	15.9	20.3	28.1	13.5	15.6	7.7	14.3	8.3	19.0	
6: unskilled	6.5	8.7	15.6	2.7	3.1				4.8	
7: students	10.3	8.7	6.3	10.8	9.4	15.4	14.3	16.7	4.8	25.0
8: housewives	20.6	15.9	6.3	24.3	18.8	38.5	28.6	25.0	19.0	50.0
(N=)	(107)	(69)	(32)	(37)	(32)	(13)	(7)	(12)	(21)	(4)
(N in V=)	(74)	(52)	(28)	(24)	(23)	(6)	(4)	(7)	(16)	(1)

2 PRODUCTION: HIGH-BURRERS

High-burrers tend to be, relatively speaking, somewhat older people from the village or from the region (exclusively) who have lived in the village for a long time and who have gone to the ordinary kind of school (table 1). They tend to belong to lower-to-middle social class ranges and be employed, typically, in agricultural and manual occupations (in that order). In terms of status, there are no intermediate white-collars amongst the high-burrers. In terms of class, only the highest and the lowest classes (but not the middle) are represented in the non-manual and agricultural sections, whereas all classes are represented in the manual section.

2.1 Stickers

In initial position stickers show a very stable behaviour (burr-index = 99.8%)[7]: most stickers (84%) have only back realisations, and those who also have a front realisation have only one or two front /r/ each (burr-index = 98.6%) and only one in any one class. A few words (10%) were affected by front /r/: (I:1=) rapine, reticle; (I:2=) wrought, rude; (I:3=) rain, rye, road (for the test-word[8] reticle, the observation 'after stumbling' was made).

Only tonic-(r) was affected: all instances of pretonic-(r) (=21% of all word items in this position) were preserved as back /R/ (cf the findings for low-burrers below, where pretonic-(r) will be seen to be an important operant acting as a restraint on the linguistic change in progress, thus preserving back /R/). A tendency for front realisations to go with back vowels[9] may be observed (table 2) (cf the findings for low-burrers below, where front V will be seen to be an operant interacting with stress as a restraint on the ongoing change, thus preserving back /R/). Thus, indications seem to exist that both stress (tonic/pretonic) and vowel quality (front/back) may be operants in dialect space on (r) with regard to the tension present for this variable between a back (or marked) realisation and a front (or unmarked) realisation.

Table 2. Vowel quality after /r/ - stickers with (r)-1: percentages for items with (r)-1

	Over all	Aver. here	I:1 here	I:1 av.	I:2 here	I:2 av.	I:3 here	I:3 av.
Front V	69	57	100	87	-	41	66	68
Back V	31	43	-	13	100	59	33	32

These few stickers differ significantly from the rest of the stickers in initial position both in terms of social characteristics and in terms of linguistic attitudes. With one exception (cf below), they are all older than the rest (over 45), and they are all employed in various kinds of service

occupations, mostly low-status (60%) manual or non-manual, or manual if higher-status. They belong to the lowest non-manual, or to the lowest-but-one or the middle manual, social classes. Interestingly enough, half of them had a school background in a selective kind of school (as against only 12.5 per cent for high-burrers generally; v. table 1). Two illustrating additional observations can be made: the only person in the non-manual section here is a sticker in initial and intervocalic positions, but becomes a middler (that is, has more front /r/) in postconsonantal position; and the only young person here (age-group 10-14) produced one instance of (r)-1 after stumbling on the test-word reticle (cf above). The type of school for this child was grammar school (that is, a selective school).

These are largely characteristics that we would intuitively associate with susceptibility, not as absolute evidence of an ongoing change in these speakers but rather as slips indicating how and from where the pressure comes. The adult stickers here all see themselves (rightly[10]) as speaking dialect (table 3), which they claim by and large that they like, and which not one of them has ever changed or modified but which all of them will ad-

Table 3. Self-evaluation - stickers with (r)-1: percentages

	Over-all	All Adults here			Over-all	All Adults here	
I-Characterisation				Adaptation			
1: dialect	62.2	80	100	1: no	34.4		
2: some "	28.9	20		2: yes	65.6	100	100
3: no "	8.9			Comments (reaction)			
II- Sensitivity				1: no notice	64.4	40	25
1: positive	59.6	80	75	2: just fun	7.8	20	25
2: indiffer.	21.3	20	25	3: negative	21.1	20	25
3: negative	19.4			4: strongly negative	6.7	20	25
Modification							
1: no	78.9	80	100				
2: yes	21.1	20					
	(N=)	(90)	(5)	(4)			

just when talking with others. And they do not particularly like comments from others about their speech. They are clearly in favour of a next-to-national Standard, even if they are not so much in favour of RP, and they have a strong dislike for the accent of their own area and particularly for that of Tyneside, their own conurbation area (table 4): these accents are in fact the only accents which were negatively evaluated by the stickers with some (r)-1.

A few illustrating additional remarks can be made to these evaluations. First, the stickers in the non-manual section volunteered no subjective

Table 4. Subjective evaluation - stickers with (r)-1: percentages

Positive	Over all	All here	Negative	Over all	All here
1. RP	45.0	25	1. RP	3.9	
2. Scottish	26.3	25	2. Scottish	5.2	
3. South-east	6.3	25	3. South-east	5.2	
4. London	6.3		4. London	6.5	
5. North-east	6.3		5. Midlands	16.9	
6. American	5.0	25	6. North-east	19.5	33
7. Midlands	3.8		7. American	20.8	
8. Tyneside	1.3		8. Tyneside	22.1	66
(N=)	(80)	(4)		(77)	(3)

evaluation at all, and the higher-status middle manual social class sticker did not want to state which accent he liked least, whereas the low-status stickers offered both positive and negative evaluations. Secondly, the young sticker here was the one who rated American first, something which may perhaps be due to voice quality[11] or to the status an American accent once had for British pop singers (cf Trudgill 1983:Ch.8) and which it may still have had in this part of Britain at the time of the interviews (1972).

2.2 Middlers

There is only one middler in initial position (diagr. 1): he thus has a behaviour of which both /burr/ and /non-burr/ form part (burr-index = 70.8%). The words affected by front /r/ (29%) are: (I:1 =) rag, rancid, receive, red, remain, respect, wrestle, rigid, run; (I:2 =) recent, reek, regal; (I:3 =) rain, raise, reign, rhyme, ripe, rise, road, rope, round.

Being on our way in dialect space from the high-burrers to the low-burrers, we should expect no straight route. At some point in space the area of influence of high-burrer patterns begins to loose its potency and gives way to low-burrers patterns which instead begin to increase their dominance. Thus, we see that like the stickers above and also like the majority of the low-burrers below (shifters & occasionalists), this middler has relatively speaking most front /r/ before VV (I:3). Unlike the stickers, however, and also unlike the majority of the low-burrers (shifters & occasionalists), he is least affected by front realisations not before short V (I:1) but before long V (I:2), and in this respect he is rather like the irregulars below, who have back /R/ before long V only.

Phonological change may manifest itself gradually and variably in response to internal and external factors, but there is hardly any knowing what exact course this kind of behaviour would take, if projected further in dialect

space to a point closer to the low-burrers. At this particular point however, we can notice a tendency for front realisations of the (r) variable to go with front vowels and also that this tendency is associated with the class before long V (table 5) where a front /r/ goes exclusively with front vowels. As categories of speakers, high-burrers do not differ with respect to vowel quality: both categories tend to have front C together with front V in initial

Table 5. Vowel quality after /r/ - middlers: percentages for items with (r)-1

	Over all	Aver. here	I:1 here	I:1 av.	I:2 here	I:2 av.	I:3 here	I:3 av.
Front V	69	81	89	87	100	41	66	68
Back V	31	19	11	13	-	59	33	32

position (compared with the distribution of front vs. back V in the word material) (table 6), but different types of speakers who occupy a different position along the route tend to be differentially affected by this operant. Thus, this middler differs from the stickers with instances of (r)-1 above, who instead tend to have front C with back V (cf table 2) as an effect of the 'distinctness' factor which may be hypothetically assumed to account for the variation observed at that point in dialect space. He also differs from the low-burrers generally in having a higher share of front C before front V:

Table 6. Relation (r)-1 → FV/BV: percentages for High-burrers (stickers & middlers) & Low-burrers (occasionalists, shifters, & irregulars)

	Over all	High			Low				
		Sti	Mi	Av.	Occ	Shi	Av.	Irr	Av.
Front V	69	57	81	75	67	86	75	41	70
Back V	31	43	19	25	33	14	25	59	30

hence it may be that contiguity in the front sector is a particularly potent factor at a point where value pressures are consciously felt that are conflicting with traditional habits of behaviour and where, in consequence, adjustments in behaviour are made. The figures here make the position of this middler relative to the stickers with instances of (r)-1 comparable to the position ot the shifters relative to the occasionalists in terms of relative behaviour, and further along the route we shall be able to see that this is largely so also in terms of relative attitudes insofar as self-evaluation is concerned.

This middler characterises his own speech as dialect. He claims to like it, and he has never modified or changed it but he will adjust it in front of others (as witnessed by his performance here). He says he takes no notice of

comments about his own speech from others, but this may perhaps be mere pretension on his part however, for he reports himself as using (r)-1, that is front /r/. He is obviously an over-reporter: his burr-index score (v.above) shows that he used 71 per cent /R/, whereas he reported that he normally used /r/. We thus have a clear case of inaccuracy in self report. In terms of overt prestige, traditional dialect patterns may perhaps have some positive value for this speaker (since he says that he likes his dialect), but they certainly have no such value with respect to the burr: this is evidently a variable which is involved in change with this middler. On this point he is obviously dissatisfied with the way he speaks, and would prefer to be able to use a form which is less marked. Characteristically enough, his social background is in the middle manual social range.

With the stickers above, all front realisations affected tonic-(r) only. It may be assumed that this is because of the greater saliency which a stressed position involves. Given the variation observed in the population for pre-vocalic (r), and particularly on the assumption of an ongoing change, it would then seem reasonable to assume that pretonic-(r) would also become affected at some point in space. This is such a point. Here, pretonic-(r) also has front realisations. Such instances are found before short V only (table 7), and since all pretonic-(r) before short V go with front V in the material (cf table 11), these instances of pretonic-(r) are found before front V. The share of such instances here is lower than the overall average for pretonic-(r). Insofar as the operant stress is concerned, the route thus appears to be straight.

Table 7. Tonic-(r) & pretonic-(r) - middlers: percentages for items with (r)-1

	Overall	I:1	I:2	I:3	Aver.
Tonic-(r)	79	66	100	100	86
Pretonic-(r)	21	33	-	-	14

In sum, rather than being an area to be designated no-man's-land, this area in dialect space is to be seen as an area of conflicting interests.

This middler remains a middler in all three pre-vocalic positions and in their various classes. His linguistic profile for the (r) variable over the five positions (pre-vocalic & post-vocalic) is even (the occurrence of (r)-2 was similar in the five positions involved), which is a behavioural profile suggesting "fairly strong tensions and a kind of hesitancy" (Påhlsson 1982: 396) on the part of the speakers, who appear to find themselves in a rootless position in the community and to be involved in a search for a new

place and a new security. These speakers also have a tendency to over-report their use (r)-1 which is rather strong (table 8).

The sensitivity of this middler is demonstrated in like manner by the distribution of the relative proportion of (r)-1 vs. (r)-2 (that is, front /r/ vs. back /R/) over the reading-list, divided into three equal parts (101 words each): in the first part one (r) in two was a front /r/, in the second part one in three, and in the final part one in seven was a front /r/. In the beginning, his awareness of its marked value made him attempt an obvious suppression of the burr, whereas later, as the reading proceeded, he gradually slid back into the dialect patterns (the distribution in the other two prevocalic positions shows, however, that this kind of modification cannot be seen as symmetrical: it is rather to be seen as a filter through which the differential effect and weight of the linguistic operants are channelled). No such tendency applies to the stickers with some (r)-1 above.

Table 8. Self-report of (r) by behavioural profiles: high-burrers & low-burrers

Profiles	(r) used		Percentage reported	
	High	Low		
	(r)-2	(r)-1	(r)-2	(r)-1
I even	40	60	20	80
II falling	40	60	40	60
III double falling	29	71	14	86
IV falling w. reversal	67	33	54	46
V reversed	48	52	19	81

3 PRODUCTION: LOW-BURRERS

Low-burrers tend to be, relatively seen, younger people from the region or Tyneside who have moved in over the years and who have gone to the ordinary kind of school but who may also have been through further education (table 1). They tend to belong to higher-to-middle social class ranges or to be housewives. Furthermore, the upper-middle and middle non-manual social classes have only low-burrers, and so does the clerical status group.

Diagram 2 shows that the pull away from the burr is operative on the low-burrers as an effect of vowel quantity: the higher the quantity, the higher the number of non-burr realisations. The pull is seen most before diphthongs (I:3), somewhat less before long vowels (I:2), and much less before short vowels (I:1). Back realisations and vowel length have thus a negative correlation: the longer the vowel segment, the lower the number of back realisations, and the shorter the vowel segment, the higher the number of back /R/ (cf below, however).

Low-burrers are thus affected in different ways here. Before short vowels (I:1) there is a pull towards /burr/ (v. the shift towards the right in the diagram): this pull of back realisations applies equally to both high-burrers and low-burrers. Before long vowels (I:2) and before diphtongs (I:3) there is instead a pull towards /non-burr/ (v. the shift towards the left in the diagram): this pull of front realisations applies equally to both high-burrers and low-burrers. Thus, the difference in distribution points to vowel quantity having a differential effect on the behaviour of the speakers in the perspective of the ongoing change: front realisations are more easily released before long vowels (diphthongs), whereas back realisations are more easily preserved before short vowels. In other words, a following short vowel acts as a restraint upon the change in progress.

The patterns observed here, with a major difference between /r/ before short vowels on the one hand and /r/ before long vowels and diphthongs on the other, was to be expected from the point of view of the dialect: in the dialect, Standard English diphthongs tend to be pronounced as long monophthongs. Two main categories thus obtain in word initial position: /r/ before short V (short vowels, = I:1) and /r/ before long V (long vowels & diphthongs, = I:2 & I:3).

Other potential operants besides vowel quantity are the quality of the following vowel (front/back) and stress (tonic/pretonic). The three classes differ as regards the quality of the following vowel (table 9): in view of the distribution of front realisations observed for these classes (cf diagram 2), the difference in behaviour between the classes can hardly be an effect

Table 9. /rV/ - the quality of the vowel after /r/: percentages

	I:1	I:2	I:3	Aver.
Front V	87	41	68	69
Back V	13	59	32	31

of the following vowel alone, however (should that have been the case, the pattern registered for (r) before long vowels and diphthongs would no doubt have been different). The classes also differ as regards stress (table 10): here, an effect on the result cannot be ruled out, for the figures correspond too neatly to the distribution of (r)-1 over these three classes (v.

Table 10. Tonic-(r) & pretonic-(r): percentages

	I:1	I:2	I:3	Aver.
Tonic-(r)	60	88	96	79
Pretonic-(r)	40	12	4	21

Diagram 2. Phonic environments and types of speakers in word initial position

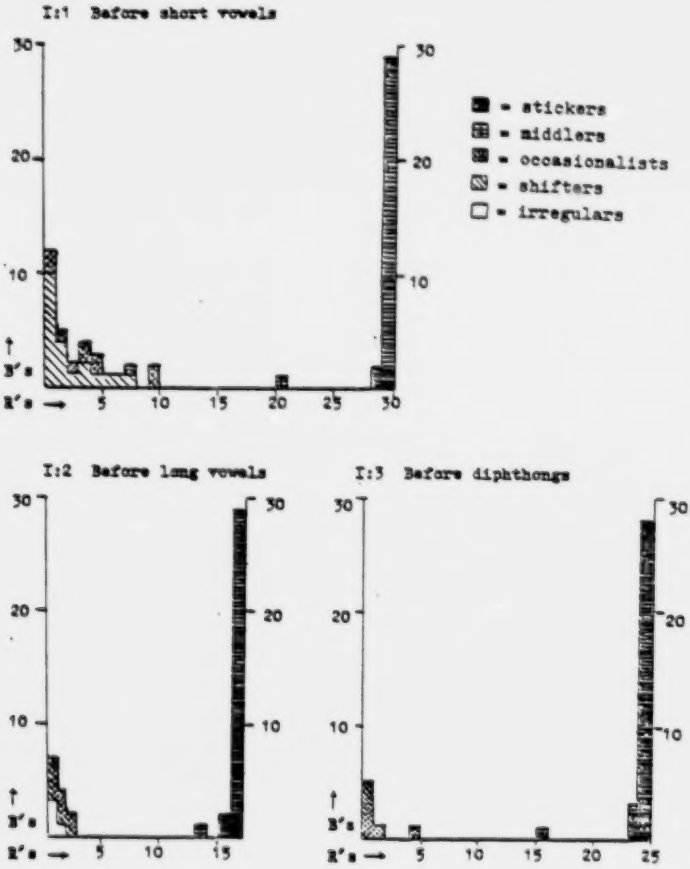

diagram 2). Thus, if stress is an operant here, then the pull towards back realisations observed before short vowels (I:1) should be - at least partly - an effect of /r/ in pretonic positions (= in the syllable before the stressed syllable). The assumption seems plausible, as pretonic-(r) involves a position which carries less saliency compared to tonic-(r) positions (stressed syllables). In pretonic positions the burr stands out less strongly

as a marked form: thus it would not in the same degree become the object of subconscious or conscious attempts at modification on the part of the speaker. The assumption in fact tallies with the observations made for high-burrers above: both stickers and the middler there showed relatively speaking more front /r/ in cases where (r) is found in the stressed syllable, that is to say where (r) is tonic.

The way in which these potential operants combine when examined together is shown in table 11:

Table 11. Potential operants before short (I:1) & long (I:2) vowels and before diphthongs (I:3) - stress & vowel quality: percentages

	I:1		I:2		I:3		
	FV	BV	FV	BV	FV	BV	Aver.
Tonic-(r)	58	100	86	90	94	100	79
Pretonic-(r)	42	-	14	10	6	-	21

Let us finally consider the relationship between the instrument used and the behaviour observed. We do that by dividing the reading-list into three equal parts of 101 words each, and by comparing the relative distribution of these potential operants as represented in the word items of each part and the instances of (r)-2 across the reading-list so divided: table 12 shows the figures for all low-burrers. Three circumstances stand out. First, the factors vowel

Table 12. Relative distribution of (r)-2 across the reading-list in three parts: low-burrers

		I:1				I:2				I:3			
		Tonic		Pret.		Tonic		Pret.		Tonic		Pret.	
		FV	BV	FV	BV	FV	BV	FV	BV	FV	BV	FV	BV
1	Words	3	2	6	-	4	2	-	-	7	3	2	-
	(r)-2	3	1	15	-	4	0	-	-	4	1	0	-
2	Words	6	-	3	-	2	2	2	-	10	4	-	-
	(r)-2	5	-	7	-	0	0	2	-	2	2	-	-
3	Words	11	3	9	-	3	10	-	2	6	4	-	-
	(r)-2	12	1	33	-	4	6	-	0	2	0	-	-

quantity (length) and vowel quality (front/back) are operants conditioning the behaviour in some degree. Secondly, the most potent operant on predominantly (r)-1 users in word initial position is seen to be stress, however, and this seems to be so particularly in unstressed syllables before short vowels: it is in such phonic contexts of low saliency that (r)-2 is best retained with the low-burrers. Thirdly, the table shows rather conclusively that there is no reason to assume a general modification of more 'natural behaviour' in the beginning of the reading-list which would act to suppress the burr as compared

with the behaviour towards the end of the list: a tendency rather in the opposite direction is seen for vowel quality in stressed syllables with more (r)-1 towards the end, whereas the most potent factor, stress, brings out (r)-2 more strongly towards the end of the reading-list.

3.1 Types of speakers

In word initial position the low-burrers' normal pattern of behaviour is to have back realisations in one class only (67.6%): either before short V or before long V (= long vowels, as all low-burrers before diphthongs also have /R/ in one or both of the other classes). Occasionalists are speakers who have /R/ in more than one class (N=12). Shifters are speakers who have /R/ before short vowels only (N = 21). Irregulars are speakers who have /R/ before long vowels only (N = 4).

Before short vowels (I:1), there are two types of speakers: occasionalists (N = 11) and shifters (N = 21). Before long vowels (I:2), there are also two types of speakers: occasionalists (N = 9) and irregulars (N = 4). Before diphthongs (I:3), there is only one type of speaker: occasionalists (N = 7). (Cf diagram 2).

Occasionalists, as being least affected amongst the low-burrers by the ongoing change (burr-index = 9.4), are or may be affected by the pull of the burr in all classes: before short and long vowels, and before diphthongs. Their burr-indices (table 13) show that the extent to which they are or may be affected

Table 13. Burr-indices: occasionalists, shifters & irregulars

	I	I:1		I:2	I:3
	Over all	Tonic /r/	Pretonic /r/		
Occasionalists	9.4	15.8 (8.6)	(27.3)	10.5	6.9
Shifters	3.6	8.7 (2.9)	(17.5)	-	-
Irregulars	1.7	-		7.4	-

by back realisations is inversely related to vowel length (quantity): the longer the vowel segment, the lesser the influence of (r)-2. In fact, occasionalists constitute the only type of speaker here who represents what appears to be the general pattern in word initial position (v. diagram 2). What we find here is that not only is the effect of the pull of the burr felt in a decreasing degree over the three classes, but the effect may also disappear

altogether so that some occasionalists have no back realisations at all in for example class I:3, viz. before diphthongs. The indices also show that the inverse relation is mainly due to the influence of one particular operant, however, viz. stress (this is so not only before short vowels, as is evident from table 13, but also in the other two classes, for which, however, no figures are supplied because of the low numbers of pretonic-(r) generally in these classes; cf table 12).

Shifters, as being more affected amongst the low-burrers by the ongoing change (burr-index = 3.6), no longer experience any pull of the burr before long V (long vowels & diphthongs). The pull is still felt before short V, however, (I:1). As with the occasionalists, that pull is again very much related to stress. In fact, the shifters have a bigger relative difference between the indices for tonic-(r) and for pretonic-(r) than the occasionalists, something which suggests that stress is the ultimate operant before regularity dissolves into irregularity in dialect space, that is to say into more asymmetrical occurrences of (r)-2.

Irregulars, as being most affected amongst the low-burrers by the ongoing change (burr-index = 1.7), have back realisations before long vowels only (I:2). In this they are unique. Although their burr-index is relatively high in this class (= 7.4) - and in this connexion the striking regularity of these burr-indices is worth observing (v. table 13) -, it is lower than the corresponding burr-index of the occasionalists, who are also represented in this class. The irregulars appear to have left the dialect domains where some symmetry may still prevail: as we shall see below, there is no indication either that stress is an active operant with the irregulars.

3.2 Social and self-evaluative characteristics

Occasionalists tend to be somewhat younger villagers who may have somewhat higher education and who very clearly tend to belong to the middle manual social class, or be school-children (table 1). Relatively speaking, at some point in time they have modified their way of speaking which they now tend to see less as dialect and which they tend not to adjust to the speech of the interlocutor (table 14). They in fact take no notice of comments from others, or else they think such comments are just fun. Some sensitivity is attested, however.

They may be somewhat negatively disposed towards their own speech (table

Table 14. Self-evaluation - occasionalists, shifters & irregulars: percentages

	Over all	Occ	Shi	Irr		Over	Occ	Shi	Irr
I-Characterisation					Adaptation				
1: dialect	62.2	50	65	50	1: no	34.4	50	41	75
2: some dialect	28.9	40	29	25	2: yes	65.5	50	59	25
3: no dialect	8.9	10	6	25	Comments (reaction)				
II-Sensitivity					1: no notice	64.4	80	82	50
1: positive	59.6	50	53	50	2: just fun	7.8	20		
2: indifferent	21.3	20	29	25	3: negative	21.1		12	50
3: negative	19.4	30	18	25	4: strongly neg.	6.7		6	
Modification									
1: no	78.9	40	76	50					
2: yes	21.1	60	24	50					

14), and they may, at the same time, have somewhat positive attitudes towards the accent of their own area (table 15), but this sensitivity certainly does not work in favour of RP, towards which they in fact have mixed feelings: instead, they appear to have an orientation towards something which is less 'posh', something which stands closer to their own intermediate position (v. table 15 and the ratings for South-East).

Shifters tend to be younger villagers or fairly recent inmigrators, who have the ordinary kind of school background and who tend to have non-manual jobs and be higher on social class but lower on status. These shifters characterise themselves much more as speaking dialect, which they have not really ever changed but which they will adjust to the speech of others. They may be somewhat indifferent themselves and although some may not like comments from others about their language, the great majority take no notice. Their esteem of RP is

Table 15. Subjective evaluation - occasionalists, shifters & irregulars: percentages

	Over all	Occ	Shi	Irr		Over all	Occ	Shi	Irr
Positive					Negative				
1. RP	45.0	70	63	66	1. RP	3.9	20		
2. Scottish	26.3	10	25	33	2. Scottish	5.2		6	
3. South-East	6.3	30	6		3. South-East	5.2			33
4. London	6.3	10			4. London	6.5		13	
5. North-East	6.3	10			5. Midlands	16.9	20	13	33
6. American	5.0	10			6. North-East	19.5	20	19	
7. Midlands	3.8		6		7. American	20.8	30	19	
8. Tyneside	1.3	10			8. Tyneside	22.1	10	31	33
(N=)	(80)	(10)	(16)	(3)		(77)	(10)	(16)	(3)

indeed high, and they do not like the accent of their own neighbouring conurbation area, from which, it will be noted, one in four of these shifters hail.

Irregulars are recent in-migrators and are either housewives or school-children from the burr-area, having a non-selective school background, or, if economically active, from Tyneside, having been through further education and belonging to the non-manual middle social class and having a supervisory status (table 1). In fact, irregulars are all females. They tend to have modified their own way of speaking, which they now tend not to call dialect and which they will not really adjust to the speech of the person they talk to (table 14). They may be somewhat negatively disposed towards their own speech and they certainly do not like comments from others. Sensitivity is thus revealed. Also, they rate RP very high, and they are critical of the Tyneside accent (table 15).

Most occasionalists, shifters, and irregulars, that is to say most low-burrers, take a positive view of their own way of speaking or are indifferent to it. But irregulars are particularly sensitive to comments from others.

At first sight, it may perhaps surprise us that shifters should consider themselves more as dialect speakers than occasionalists do. However, this difference does not necessarily imply that they also do speak more dialect than occasionalists, and need not be interpreted so either: the subjective facts may not necessarily correspond to the objective facts. Instead, age and particularly the social position of the shifters and the occasionalists can give us the reason for this seeming aberration. Occasionalists are (younger) villagers in the middle manual social range: in such an environment, if you have changed or modified your speech habits away from the dialect patterns at some point in time, as they say they have done, it makes sense to claim, as they do, that your language is not so much dialect, especially since you are not too sensitive to prestige but may accept, as they do, also more localised accents as part of your subjective evaluative patterns in some degree. In a relative perspective, these occasionalists are both logical and right. Shifters are (younger) villagers or in-migrators in the non-manual range who tend to be high on class but low on status: in this environment it would seem to make sense that your language may appear to you to be rather dialectal, especially since you are more sensitive to comments from others and since you very clearly have a high regard for RP or modified accents, as these shifters have. In a relative perspective, the shifters too are both logical and right.

Logically, irregulars 'should' have claimed more dialect. That they have not done. They instead claimed less dialect. In this they may be right, but it certainly is how they want to see themselves. This image prevents them from admitting to any need for modifications in front of others, since their

speech habits may have been changed or modified already. But their aspirations towards prestigious speech, most notably towards RP, make them nevertheless very sensitive to comments from others. Thus, the irregulars may appear as rather irregular, but in the perspective of their own paradigm they too may be seen as both logical and right: as a result of a difference in tension between pretended appearance and held values, the attitudes of these females are different from those of others and so is their behaviour.

Obviously, low-burring in the three classes recognized for the (r) variable in word initial position involves somewhat different social correlates (table 1). Compared with low-burrers generally here, low-burrers before short V tend to be villagers of middle status, whereas low-burrers before long V tend to represent a steady in-migration over the years: before long vowels somewhat older villagers of higher status or housewives, and before diphthongs younger villagers in middle manual occupations or housewives.

3.3 Internal and external patterns before short vowels

Before short vowels (I:1), the words affected by back /R/ for occasionalists are (in order of frequency): refuse (N = 6), receive, relief, return, rebuke, redan, result, red, ready, redeem, replay, respect, reticle, rickshaw, rigid, rag (N = 1), rancid, rapine, remand, rennet, rest, rich, ring, run, plus refund (pronounced with short /i/). Thus, 24 (+ 1) words were affected (80%), whereas 6 were not (rabbit, remain, wrestle, rocket, wrong, rubbish). The words affected for shifters are (in order of frequency): refuse (N = 11), redeem, receive, respect, reply, relief, rancid, rebuke, redan, rennet, result, rich, rag, (N = 1), rapine, ready, remain, reticle, return, wrong, plus refund (pronounced with short /i/; N = 2). Thus, 19 (+ 1) words were affected (63%), whereas 11 were not (rabbit, red, remand, rest, wrestle, rickshaw, rigid, ring, rocket, rubbish, run).

For both occasionalists and shifters there is a tendency for back realisations to go with front vowels (table 16), but this is mainly because vowel quality and stress go together (table 17). We can clearly see that stress is the

Table 16. Vowel quality after /r/ - occasionalists, shifters & irregulars: percentages for items with (r)-2

	I:1			I:2			I:3	
	Occ	Shi	Av.	Occ	Irr	Av.	Occ	Av.
Front V	98	98	87	69	40	41	75	68
Back V	2	2	13	31	60	59	25	32

Table 17. Tonic-(r) & pretonic-(r) - occasionalists, shifters & irregulars: percentages for items with (r)-2

	I:1			I:2			I:3	
	Occ	Shi	Av.	Occ	Irr	Av.	Occ.	Av.
Tonic-(r)	32	20	60	87	100	88	83	96
Pretonic-(r)	68	80	40	13	-	12	17	4

deciding operant here: thus, the relation between tonic-(r) and pretonic-(r) is more than reversed for occasionalists and is much more than reversed for shifters. Now, if shifters are to be seen as further advanced than occasionalists in the ongoing change, that is to say as more affected by front realisations, then more pretonic back /R/ should be found with the shifters. This is also the case: relatively seen, shifters are noticeably more affected by (r)-2 in cases where /r/ is pretonic, that is to say in unstressed syllables. Hence, in the perspective of a change in progress, stress appears as the ultimate restraint acting to preserve burring in word initial position.

3.4 Internal and external patterns before long vowels

Before long vowels (I:2), the words affected by back /R/ for occasionalists are (in order of frequency): region (N = 5), raucous, refund, regal, rather (N = 1), read, reap, roof, rude. Thus, 9 words were affected (53%), whereas 8 were not (recent, reek, rood, room, rouge, wrought, routine, rule). The words affected for irregulars are (in order of frequency): rood (N = 2), read (N = 1), regal, rude. Thus, 4 words were affected (24%), whereas 13 were not.

For occasionalists there is a tendency for back realisations to go with front vowels (table 16), but this is again mainly due to vowel quality and stress going together (table 17). Since irregulars have no pretonic back /R/, there is no such tendency with them. Instead, irregulars have back realisations in stressed syllables only: this is an exceptional pattern, but irregulars, as their name implies, also represent a more exceptional, or irregular, pattern of behaviour (cf also above).

Occasionalists here are somewhat older villagers who rather tend to have a somewhat higher social position than occasionalists generally, or be housewives. In a comparison, irregulars can almost be called the 'shifters' of this class: not only do they have (r)-2 in one class only, but relative to the occasionalists here they also have a social profile which is not altogether dissimilar from that of the shifters relative to the occasionalists before short vowels (I:1): irregulars are all rather recent in-migrators, however, and they are all females. In terms of attitudes, the main differences that

these occasionalists show here, compared to occasionalists generally, are that the majority see themselves as speaking 'some dialect' only and that they are less critically disposed towards RP (cf tables 14,15). Thus, we observe even on this point a certain parallelism between occasionalists and irregulars here, on the one hand, and occasionalists and shifters above, on the other.

3.5 Internal and external patterns before diphthongs

Before diphthongs (I:3), the words affected by back /R/ for occasionalists are (in order of frequency): regime (N = 2), rival, rage (N = 1), rate, rhyme, right, ripe, rope, roup, royal. Thus, 10 words were affected (40%), whereas 15 were not (railing, rain, raise, rape, razor, reign, rifle, rise, write, road, roan, rose, round, rowan, rye).

There is a tendency for back realisations to go with front vowels (table 16), but again this is because vowel quality and stress go together (table 17).

In this class only occasionalists are found, and only occasionalists are affected. Amongst occasionalists, they are the younger adult in-migrators in low non-manual (clerical) and middle manual occupations. Relatively seen, occasionalists here are different in their attitudes from occasionalists generally only in regard to the characterisation of their own speech, which the majority here claim to be 'some dialect' only, and in regard to RP, of which they are more critical (cf tables 14&15). The higher prestigious value observed for RP with the occasionalists before long vowels above (I:2) may be accounted for as an effect of the social factor and the sex factor: there, occasionalists either have a higher social rank or are housewives, whereas here, they have a lower social rank. Thus, higher up the social scale RP may have a greater prestigious value, whereas lower down the scale that may not necessarily be the case, at least not in the same degree. Also, as we have seen, RP has a high prestige value amongst women. There is, however, also a difference in age between these two groups of occasionalists: those in class I:2 (before long vowels) are on average older than those here. Whether this difference in age has any significance for the different prestige value noticed for RP here is impossible to say. Should that difference have some general significance, the implication would be that RP, in the eyes of younger generations, may have lost some of its former high prestige.

3.6 Low-burrers: final general remarks

In the production of some few low-burrers front /r/ was observed to be realised in a rather meticulous and forced way as an effect of attempts at adjusting

the pronunciation to the patterns of the innovation: this was so particularly with occasionalists and shifters, in which cases (r)-1 often was a roll or a tap, or a retroflex, and this realisation tended to occur in such phonic contexts as are otherwise likely to produce (r)-2. No general tendency was observed with the low-burrers for (r)-2 to be more likely to appear towards the end of the reading-list.

4 CONCLUDING REMARKS

The synchronic situation of the (r) variable in word initial position is characterised by variability on all of the parameters examined in dialect space: temporal, spatial, social, sexual, and phonic. The evidence points incontestably to an ongoing change in the village, a change which stands out as being both socially and phonetically conditioned, with stress as the underlying internal factor: the route of the innovation is set by (r) in stressed syllables as opposed to (r) in unstressed syllables where instead (r)-2 is more likely to be retained. The linguistic situation of (r) involves a shift from high-burring to low-burring, from what may historically have been a use of back /R/ for all or most inhabitants in the village (Defoe 1724-27, vol. iii, p. 232-233. Heslop 1903:16) to the use of front /r/ as the only variant or of front /r/ in free variation with back /R/. Insofar as a diachronic inference can be made on the basis of the evidence, this sound change appears to proceed gradually through the population. Its rate of change is not uniform but describes a kind of diffusion of the S-curve type. The change also appears as lexically gradual.[12] Table 18 shows not only that some lexical items are affected whereas are not, but also that different items are affected to different extents by the innovation (this should be obvious if the table is read 'backwards'). What we observe is obviously a case of lexical diffusion, a phonological change which is lexically gradual and not regular.[13]

Although the change is by and large phonetically discontinuous, there is some evidence in the material that it may also be phonetically gradual to some extent. Stickers tended to have a more prominent uvular pronunciation on average, particularly older and lower-class (r)-2 users, whereas the young stickers had a more prominent velar (that is, fronted) pronunciation. Also, a tendency was observed for some burrers, both high- and low-burrers, who had a more velar-like pronunciation to also have lip-rounding in a varying degree: in such cases lip-rounding can be seen as bridging the discontinuity which exists between back /R/ and front /r/ in regard to place of articulation.

Table 18. Low-burrers: percentage of (r)-2 in the lexical items in word initial position

Before short V		Before long V		Before diphthong	
refuse	46	region	14	regime	5
receive	24	regal	8	rival	5
redeem	22	raucous	5	rage	3
relief	19	read	5	rate	3
respect	19	refund	5	right	3
reply	16	rood	5	ripe	3
rebuke	14	rude	5	rhyme	3
redan	14	rather	3	rope	3
result	14	reap	3	roup	3
return	14	roof	3	royal	3
rancid	8				
ready	8	recent	0	railing	0
rennet	8	reek	0	rain	0
reticle	8	room	0	raise	0
rich	8	rouge	0	rape	0
rag	5	wrought	0	razor	0
rapine	5	routine	0	reign	0
red	5	rude	0	rifle	0
rickshaw	5			rise	0
rigid	5			write	0
remain	3			road	0
remand	3			roan	0
rest	3			rose	0
ring	3			round	0
wrong	3			rowan	0
run	3			rye	0
rabbit	0				
wrestle	0				
rocket	0				
rubbish	0				

The route of the change observed for the (r) variable in Thropton may not be completely straight but it is not random: there is a social matrix in which the change is embedded as well as a linguistic matrix conditioning its course.

FOOTNOTES

1 The report is based upon material from two separate investigations, one into linguistic behaviour carried out in 1969 (Påhlsson 1972) and one into linguistic attitudes carried out in 1972 (Påhlsson 1973, 1982).

2 It can be noted that just over half of all in-migrators (52.1%) had moved in from various parts of the burr-area outside Tyneside conurbation.

3 Hardly affecting whole life residence, the in-migration from Tyneside had taken place mainly during the last 15-20 years before the time of the investigation (i.e. before 1969) - that is to say, it is basically a postwar feature. Most of these in-migrators were adults, aged over 45 in particular and especially over 65. If they were not housewives, most of them were or had been employed in non-manual occupations (with a minority found in the middle manual social class) and they tended to be high on social class with half of them located in the upper middle non-manual class (= the Register General's II-non-manual), making up exactly one third of all informants of that particular class (for details on the statistics, v. Påhlsson 1972:235).

4 This is far from saying that the physical phonetic qualities of each utterance of a speaker, of each instance of /r/, have no significance in this respect. Indeed, the importance of the concrete level of phonetic substance, namely of the articulatory and perceptual apparatus, for why a sound system changes the way it does has been argued at great length by for example Chen & Wang (1975).

5 The fact that linguistic performance tends to vary with different types of circumstances or situations has been demonstrated beyond doubt by modern linguistic research. Channel cues, such as change in tempo or pitch-range (which can be used to identify less formal types of speach; v. Labov 1972:94ff), and other observations did not point to any perceptible differences in the use of the (r) variable across the various situations during the interviews here, however. Given that no investigator can ever hope to get at the most intimate and casual performance of his informants, I want to posit that what is recorded here is part of the normal and genuine speech habits of these informants. Their performance, be it called by whatever label, should not be seen as the kind of "formal speech /which/ may be quite far removed from casual or everyday speech" (Chambers & Trudgill 1980:71).

6 The existence of changes and pressures for (r) in Thropton has been clearly attested (v. Påhlsson 1972:216f & 1982). The change from above the level of conciousness, i.e. in prevocalic positions, was found to be associated with middle and lower social ranges in its initial stage and with middle ranges in its later stage, whereas the change from below that level, i.e. in post-vocalic positions, was found to be associated with non-manual and manual upper or middle ranges in particular. Hence, there is every reason not to equate above/below the level of consciousness with class, so that a change above the level of consciousness should automatically be seen as a change from upper social groups and vice versa (something which has often been done): the question posed by Romaine (1982:267) whether these must necessarily be equated can thus be answered in the negative.

7 This index gives the percentage for the actual number of instances of (r)-2 over the total number of possible occurrences.

8 Generally speaking, no perceptibly differential realisation was observed for such words (Påhlsson 1972:61f).

9 The central vowel /ə/ was counted as back, something which is justifiable from the point of view of the dialect, and so were diphthongs of which this vowel is part. Also, /ai/ was counted as front, and /au/ as back.

10 This is so when their behaviour in general is taken into account.

11 For the eight accents, eight different voices were used. In general, with the exception of the American (Canadian) voice, these voices showed a reasonable similarity on factors such as pitch, energy etc., and all were male voices (for the text and voices used, v. Påhlsson 1982:383f).

12 The implication here is then that these synchronic findings would point to a diachronic sound change spreading gradually through the lexicon, rather than affecting all the relevant words at the same time and to the same extent.

13 For recent discussions of the Neogrammarian dogma (i.e. that sound change is always gradual, always regular, affecting all words at the same time) see for example Chen & Wang 1975, Labov 1981, Janson 1983. See also Bailey 1973, Romaine 1982:253ff.

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